



Armed Forces Retirement Home

# Communicator

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GULFPORT, MS - WASHINGTON, DC

DECEMBER 31, 2012

## Six Pearl Harbor survivors reside at AFRH-Washington

By Nicole Chappell, Recreation Specialist

On December 7th, AFRH honored their own by honoring Pearl Harbor Survivors residing at AFRH, with a special program of remembrance in the Sheridan lobby. The program began with the Star Spangled Banner and Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation given by AFRH's Father Dixon. Van Haynes opened the program with short facts about Pearl Harbor in addition to welcoming our guest speaker Catherine Deitch, which told a marvelous story

about how the attack on Pearl Harbor led her to join the military. Lastly, Dallas Jones recognized our survivors including himself with brief stories about the day leading up to Pearl Harbor. During closing remarks, Dallas Jones stood at attention leading others to do

the same, while singing God Bless the USA. Recreation would like to thank all in attendance especially, our survivors: Francis Stueve, Edward Davis, George Mamula, William McLaughlin, Dallas Jones, and Jessie McIvor.



Francis Stueve recalling the chain of events the morning of December 7, 1941.



Pearl Harbor survivors Dallas Jones (Kaneohe Naval Air Station) and Edward Davis (Schofield Barracks) were stationed on Oahu during the attack on Pearl Harbor 71 years ago.



## Gulfport honors the 71st anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor



Retired Chief Petty Officer Hugh Wingo salutes after laying a wreath in honor of military members service and sacrifice on December 7, 1941.

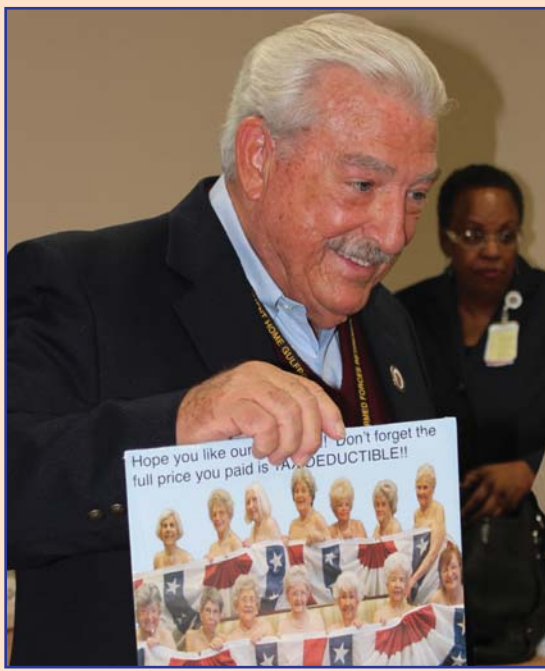
By Adelina Hay-Sowell

December 7th, 2012 at 0945 am, the Armed Forces Retirement Home Gulfport held a special ceremony to recognize and remember this same day 71 years ago. That day, which President Roosevelt called "a date which will live in infamy", marked the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, and the United States entry into World War 2. Susan Bergman, the Recreation Supervisor for D Tower, played a prelude and Amazing Grace on the Bagpipes to mark the start of the solemn ceremony of remembrance. Master Chief Ron Kartz opened the ceremony and the NMCB 11 color guard moved into place. The RAC chairman, Bill Parker, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and Father David Lemberg gave a moving invocation, both recognizing those who died 71 years ago and asking for God's blessing on our nation in the troubled times our world is now facing. Chuck Dickerson, the home's administrator, shared his thoughts on the valor and sacrifice of those men and women who lost their lives that day as well as those who lived on to fight another day to keep our country free.

Hugh Wingo, a resident WWII veteran who's ship was off the coast when Pearl Harbor was bombed, walked over and placed a wreath on a stand then saluted, representing those who are not with us to represent themselves. The men and women of NMCB 11 simultaneously fired a 21 gun salute followed by the playing of Taps. Hugh Wingo then returned to his seat and the ceremony was concluded. Hugh is also a veteran of the Battle of Midway.

Following the ceremony, Chuck Dickerson recognized Mildred Johnson of American Legion Post 33, for the donation of flags of all 50 States to the home. The flags will be flow, one each week, as we rotate through all 50 flags. Cake and coffee reception followed.

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# AFRH COMMUNICATOR

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*The AFRH Communicator is an authorized publication of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Residents and employees are encouraged to submit photos, art, news items, and features. Materials will be edited by the AFRH Communicator staff for journalistic style and length. The articles included in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the management, staff, or residents of the AFRH.*

## Serving Washington, D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi



ARMY NAVY AIR FORCE MARINE CORPS COAST GUARD

**Become a resident today!**

AFRH is not just a place to live but a place to live more. Our model retirement communities are designed for residents to maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment designed for safety, comfort and personal enrichment.

**Eligibility:** Military veterans from each service branch can live at AFRH. The following persons who served as members of the Armed Forces, at least one-half of whose service was not active commissioned service other than as a warrant officer or limited-duty officer, are eligible to become residents of the Retirement Home:

-who are 60 years of age or over; and were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.

-who are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the Armed Forces.

-who served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease, or disability.

-who served in a women's component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined under rules prescribed by the Chief Operating Officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

To receive an informational brochure please contact the AFRH Marketing Office at 1-800-422-9988, or write to AFRH, PAO/Marketing, #1305, 3700 N. Capitol St. NW, Washington DC 20011-8400. Visit us on the web at: <http://www.AFRH.gov>

A CARF-CCAC Five-Year Term of Accreditation was awarded to the Armed Forces Retirement Home. <http://www.carf.org> <http://www.carf.org/aging>



## AFRH-G Veteran Highlight

*By Ruby Woods-Robinson, M.S.L.S.*

Mr. Hoffer has a life time of interesting experiences being a native of Waterloo, Iowa. Mr. Hoffer was a classmate and a parnisher of the same church as the Sullivans Brothers. The Sullivan brothers were five siblings who were all killed in action during or shortly after the sinking of the light cruiser USS Juneau (CL-52), the vessel on which they all served, around November 13, 1942, in World War II. In June 1942 Paul was working as a Fireman on Illinois Central Railroad where he worked with the father of the Sullivan's brothers. One of his friend's brothers' was in the Marine Corp and Paul and his best friend were being patriotic and joined the Marine Corp.

Mr. Hoffer went to San Diego to Boot Camp and after completing Boot Camp, Paul took a test to go to Aviation Machinist Mate School. Only three people past this test, all three were from Iowa.

However, he went on liberty one night, stayed a little late and ended up the next day on a ship heading towards Hawaii. That train headed to the Aviation Machinist School in Illinois never showed up. Next thing he knew he was headed to Guadalcanal where he was placed in a fighter squadron. Paul was also assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Ewa and Palmyra Atoll a beautiful Islands used as refueling station for the military during World War II. While Paul was in Palmyra he was sent to U. S. MARINE CORPS of Bougainvillea, the 4th Marine Base Defense Aircraft. Wing. While here Paul was in the Quarter Master Corp and ordered the parts to repair the planes. He was transferred to Cherry Point, North Carolina and was placed in shipping and receiving – packing out military personal being sent to other duty stations. He was here until September 28, 1945 when he was discharged.

Paul had a wonderful life in the Marine Corp, he would not have wanted to be any place else. Paul's first marriage to a Marine produced seven children. Two Marine sons, five daughters. Paul has five grandchildren, and one great granddaughter.

Paul is married to Mrs. Georgia Lesh Hoffer and they are enjoying their life at the Armed Forces Retirement Home – Gulfport. Georgia has by a previous marriage one son, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Both Paul and Georgia are very active at the Retirement Home and Georgia is a blessing – she volunteers in the Chapel, the Administration Office, and the Library. Georgia also delivers birthday cards and teaches Aerobics. I do not know what Father Uko would do without Georgia and Paul. Each year there is an Mississippi Gulf Coast Honor Flight for Veterans of World War II to the District of Columbia to visit the World War II Memorial. This year Paul was selected to go.

Of all of the wars in recent memory, it was World War II that truly threatened our existence as a nation and as a culturally free, diverse society. On with over one thousand World War II veterans dying each day, our time to express our thanks to these brave men and women is running out. Each year the Honor Flight Network plan flights for our veterans to visit the Nation's Capital to visit their Memorial, along with all of the other War memorials. These veterans selected to fly see more in twenty-four (24) hours than most visitors see in a week, each have a time to think view and remember their days at war. Like Paul who left with both the good and bad memories of War, as he reflexes, he thank God and the power above for bringing him home safely.

He really remembers the day when his buddy talked into getting out of the bed and going to breakfast. Upon their return to his sleeping area they realized that area had been bombed and there was nothing left but a hole. Georgia asked him, if he ever wondered why he was spared after coming face to face with so many that didn't. He didn't hesitate. "I was supposed to marry Agnes and have seven (7) wonderful children.

After visiting the World War II museum they went on to the Korean Museum, the statue of a soldier caring an auto-



**Paul Hoffer**

matic machine gun, actually looked like his brother John and this brought back many memories of how John suffered from his wounds after coming home. Paul went on to say when he saw the raising of the flag it actually made me stand up straight. This was the Marines that did that did this. You know that! That monument was truly bigger than life. The Vietnam Wall left me grateful to the GOOD LORD that Dan's name was not there.

The Arlington Cemetery hurt my Heart, 680 acres of nothing but crosses and it's not even the ones from overseas. When Paul saw the changing of the guard, it was a really steep hill and remembered what Georgia had told him before leaving home, "Don't be a Macho Marine, if you get tired, please stay on the bus, so I stayed on the bus. The bus driver took us to where we could see them at the top and you could hear taps. When we returned to Gulfport Airport the bands, men, women and children were there to meet us waving their flags, women were grabbing me and kissing me. The Mississippi Congressman shuck my hand. I thanked God for my safe return and the terrific life he had let me live with my wonderful family and friends.

## AFRH-W Veteran Highlight



**William McLaughlin**

*By Christine Baldwin*

William McLaughlin was born in San Francisco, but moved to Wilmington, CA, where he grew up. Experiences through school in various ROTC programs convinced him to pursue a military career. In high school, in the late 1930's, he joined the Marine Corps Reserves. In 1940, William's unit was called to active duty. His commander called him in and asked if wanted an easy out to finish school. William said

"NO! If you guys are going on active duty, I'm going too!" He officially joined the Marine Corps on January 18, 1940 and was stationed at North Island, San Diego, CA. In January, 1941, William was sent to the Island of Oahu, Hawaii to build an air station. The base was named Marine Corps Air Station "ETA". William was a jack of all trades; a clean up man, a machine gunner, and RDF (radio direction finder) operator, etc. The plane they flew was the Scout Bomber Douglas.

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor at 8:00 a.m. and hit William's base at 8:05 a.m. William had just finished breakfast

and was outside the mess hall smoking his first cigarette of the day, when he saw an airplane approaching. The plane was so low he could see the gunner, and he waved to him. The man smiled and waved back. William saw the red circle on the wing, but it didn't sink in that it was a Japanese plane. Then the pilot made a hard right turn and came at them again...this time shooting! William and another man grabbed their rifles, which were Springfield bolt action rifles vintage World War 1, and returned fire. Suddenly, the aircraft began to drop and William thought "I got that sucker, I got him!" A wheel hit the runway and the plane bounced a couple of times, but then pulled up and away. Machine gun strafing from that one plane destroyed 16 of our aircraft and the hangers.

As the war progressed, William joined a Marine bomber outfit, which retrofitted and flew the B-25 Mitchell bombers on 14 hour bombing runs from Saipan, in the Pacific, clear into the main waters off Japan. They flew in complete darkness. The only light on their plane was a small red lamp the bombardier/navigator used to shine on his charts. As far as William knew, they were the first Americans in aviation history to use radar guided rockets. They were so successful at sinking Japanese ships; they received the Naval Commendation Ribbon for their efforts. William's main job was to be a line chief, supervising the aircraft maintenance operations. In February 1945, his outfit was redeployed to Iwo Jima to put their planes closer to the Japanese shipping

targets. The battle of Iwo Jima was still raging and continued for several more days. The casualties were enormous; they lost about 25,000 Marines in that campaign. It was the only time William ever saw American troops being buried by a bulldozer. But they had to do something to get them underground. They had chaplains and grave registration men removing the dog tags and did everything as respectful as possible by the book.

Next, they went to Okinawa. William was there when they dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August to end the war. There next move would have been to invade Japan and William's unit would probably have been used to supplement the invasion. For all his work, William received Battle Stars for the campaigns in Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

After the war, William went to work for a government agency called the Island Trading Company in the Marshall Islands and again in Saipan. His job was to grade and buy dried coconut in which to make palm oil. He also got a college education in New Mexico and helped build a military air base in Dharan, Saudi Arabia. However, William still had the taste for the military life, so he enlisted in the Air Force in 1956. He retired as a Master Sergeant in 1971 with 22 years of service.

William was married to a Scottish woman and has 2 grown children and 2 granddaughters still living in Scotland.

# Message from the Chief Operating Officer



As 2012 comes to a close, I am extremely proud of the fact that we have made real progress in working together as a community – both in Washington and in Gulfport. We have reached outside of our gates and our neighbors have enthusiastically become our partners. Please know that I will continue to nurture these partnerships in 2013.

Internally, I believe that one of the keys to our success in 2012 was the open communications between Residents and staff through Town Halls, All Hands and Focus Groups. The Focus Groups held at each facility kept our Resident population informed on our new construction projects, as well as new services offered to our Residents. Focus Groups proved to be most beneficial because they allowed our Residents to actively participate in major issues concerning them. Hosting these open forums in 2012 will reap positive benefits in our goal of achieving a seamless transition in 2013 as we move into the newly constructed/renovated spaces.

**2012 Highlights**

- DoD Inspector General completed an inspection of the AFRH’s Agency level (Office of the COO and Corporate Resources), as well as the Gulfport and Washington facilities.

We should receive DoD’s draft report in the beginning of 2013.

- Major construction progress on the new Scott Building (AFRH-W)
- Sherman Building renovation (new Assisted Living) begin (AFRH-W)
- Several Capital Improvement Projects completed through General Service Administration (AFRH-G)
- Exterior walk-ways (AFRH-G)
- Two major community events held at both facilities
- New Resident Advisory Committees were elected at each facility
- Senior TV installed at both facilities
- New Administrator hired (AFRH-G)

**2013 Projections**

- Grand Opening of the newly reconstructed Scott Building (May)
- Renovated spaces for Assisted Living Residents (Sheridan Building) (May)
- Relocation of staff back to the Sherman Building (January)

The bottom line is we have a strong foundation to



Chief Operating Officer Steve McManus briefs service members from the Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison, US Army about AFRH.

move forward in 2013 because of the joint effort we have taken to make AFRH a better place to live, work and play. We will continue to look and build for the future.

Happy New Year!!!

*Steven McManus*

## COO Questions and Answers

**Q:** Janitorial cleaning on the 2nd Fl. The dusting and the moping continues during all hours of the day on this floor in front of the main elevators. If you are (I) am using the computer at times they come within inches of bumping into me as I sit. If the residents are not supposed to be in this area why not post a sign that tells us Not to be there! I don't mind going somewhere else, but presently we are led to believe that US, being there is Not a problem. Will you have one of your Staff, please clarify this for us and I'm not the only User of this area. Their mop's stink & they are forever arguing loudly with each other and I truly feel like moving on when I hear the tirades that go on between them and I usually do so I suppose that is mission accomplished on their part. I would also suggest that they store their carts in the trash room on the ground floor. I know for a fact that there is ample room for their stuff and the room can be secured.

**A:** This issue was brought to the attention of the project manager of Gulf Coast Enterprises. Management has assured me the supervisors will be addressed and trained on how to properly and effectively deal with their employees. As to the concern of the employee's conduct, the Project Manager was reminded of section 8.5 of the current contract concerning employee conduct and will review this with the employees. Also addressed was reviewing with the employees behavior while cleaning around the residents and to respect the concept of Person Centered Care. The project manager of GCE met with the Custodial Building Managers, Shift Supervisors, and employees to ensure that the employee will not clean around resident's. We will no longer store the carts in trash rooms on resident floors.

Carts will be stored in the Custodial storage closet. And we assure you that employee and Management will not have discussion or issues in any common areas. Management and employees have a designated office in LaGarde Building and Sheridan Building. We apologize for the inconvenience.

**Q:** It would be nice to have "New" mail box numbers prior to mailing out Christmas Cards, etc...

**A:** "New" mail boxes numbers are being issued to those residents who need new ones. If you have questions or problems, please see the Admissions Officer, Ms. Becky Perry.

**Q:** What is happening is morally wrong and an injustice to a group of Veterans residing at both Homes. Title 24, Ch. 10 Subchapter I: Sec. 414. (C)(2) Fees paid by residents; shall be fixed as a percentage of the monthly income and monthly payments (including Federal payments) received by a resident. The percentage shall be the same for each facility of the Retirement Home. The Secretary of Defense may make any adjustment in a percentage that the Secretary determines appropriate... Sec 414 of Title 24 Ch. 10 Subsection I: Fees paid by residents (a) Monthly fees - Mr. Watkins collects a monthly fee from each resident of that facility (NOTE: KEY WORDS "FROM EACH RESIDENT") (b) Deposit of fees No problem, we assume he does so (1) The COO, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense, shall from time to time prescribe the fees required by subsection (a) of this section: Changes to such fees shall be based on the financial needs of the Retirement Home and the ability of the residents to pay. PROBLEM WITH THIS; (See Below for the remainder of this comment).

**A:** The percentage that was in place at the time the new legislation took affect still stands unless it was subsequently changed in accordance with the laws set forth in FY 2012 legislation. Bottom line -- Since the percentage was set in FY

2002 legislation and has not been changed, then the 2002 percentage is still controlling.

**Q:** Walking from the "G" floor elevator doors on both A & B Towers are several personal bicycles parked around them, it is hard enough walking around or through them on foot much less on a walker. Isn't there designated parking elsewhere, lets have one of our Seniors fall because some don't think they have to use the designated parking place.

**A:** AFRH-G does have designated bicycle parking. However, in researching this suggestion it has been determined the current designated area for bicycle parking is full. Recreation is researching pricing to add an additional rack to accommodate the remaining bicycles that were found to be in violation. We will immediately publish a reminder to all residents in the resident's weekly bulletin and add a note to the resident channel informing all residents that bicycle parking is not allowed around the elevator lobby of any tower, and that all bicycles must be stored in the resident's room or the designated bicycle parking area.

**Q:** Concerns of shrimp products served in the AFRH food service program.

**A:** There are four types of shrimp purchased from US FOODS used in the AFRH food service operations in Gulfport MS and Washington DC. Please see shrimp types below

1. Shrimp Raw => 71/90
2. Shrimp Raw => 90/110
3. Shrimp Raw 41 /50
4. Shrimp Breaded Butterfly 21 /25

All of the above products are made with wholesome quality ingredients. All processing plants are Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) approved in addition all plants are under voluntary inspection of the United States Department of Commerce (USDC).

The Chief Operating Officer wants to encourage Residents, who want feedback, to submit questions, concerns, or comments regarding the Armed Forces Retirement Home to the following email address: AFRH\_PAO@AFRH.GOV. A section of the Communicator will be set aside to provide RESIDENT feedback.

## AFRH host Tea Party in President Lincoln’s Cottage

On Tuesday, December 11th, the Ladies of the Office of the COO hosted the 9th Annual Holiday Tea Party in the historic Lincoln Cottage. Approximately 20 AFRH-Washington female Residents attended this festive event. The dining area was decorated with fresh holiday greens and brilliant red Poinsettias. Residents enjoyed the camaraderie of their fellow Residents, soft holiday music, delicious food and scrumptious deserts. Numerous raffle drawing occurred throughout the event and some our lucky winners were treated to Lincoln Blankets, Lincoln uncirculated coins collections, and other surprise gifts.

This year we had a very special attendee. President Abraham Lincoln (aka Donald Dailey) warmly welcomed each of the Ladies to his Home for tea. Mr. Lincoln, with his top hat and beard, posed with each guest for individual pictures.

This year’s event was not only festive, but it was actually historic since this was the first year that the Tea Party was actually held in the Cottage. As the event unfolded you couldn’t help feel that you were sharing a holiday moment, in a historic house, with one of our Nation’s most historic personalities – Abraham Lincoln.



Above: Several Washington ladies enjoying each others conversations and several cups of hot tea.  
Right: Mary Varva enjoying the tea with none other than President Abraham Lincoln (aka Donald Dailey).



## From the AFRH-W Administrator



Every age has a certain spirit or mood or climate to it. Ours is busyness. We're all running like lemmings from sunup to way past sundown. What's with all the energy drinks? There must be dozens

now. RocketFuel. CrankYouUp. Not to mention the coffeehouses on every corner. Why do we need all this caffeine? And why do so many of us now need sleep aids to rest at night? Our grandparents didn't. We thought the age of technology would make life simpler, easier. It has us by the throat. We need to operate at the speed of computers. Seriously, I'm irritated that my e-mails and computer slows down; when it used to take almost seven minutes for the computer to boot up, get on the internet by the dial-up connection. I realize I'm not the first to put this down on paper. People have been making this observation for a long time. We are running around like ants do when you kick in their hill, like

rats on a wheel, like Carroll's Mad Hatter.

And for some reason, we either believe we can't stop or we don't want to.

We are not going to do a thing about this until we wake one day to realize we are sick of it and we want a different life. Till then, the life of not living but getting things done has its benefits. For one, it provides us with an illusion of security—I am tackling life, I am staying on top of things. It's a false security, but we don't believe that. We believe it's our only road to security. Stay on top of things.

Then there is the wonderful quality of the endless distraction it provides—"purposeful distraction." I don't have to face myself or anyone else, because I'm so very busy. And the bonus is, I don't have to feel guilty that I'm not facing myself or anyone else, because my busyness is "just the way it is," and by golly, at least I'm showing that I'm a responsible person by getting things done. Thus I can avoid any real disruption while feeling the victim of circumstances beyond my control.

If we really want to live differently, we'd show some sign of that in our choices. So I am going to turn off this computer and enjoy what is left of the day.

## Wreaths Across America 2012 at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery

By George L. Wellman – AFRH-W

Volunteers with the Wreaths Across America program visited the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery on Saturday, 15 December 2012. This year, volunteers placed wreaths in Section "O" of this historic cemetery. Interred in this section are Medal of Honor recipients, Major General David S. Stanley and Private Louis Gedeon. General Stanley, a Union Army Officer, received his medal for actions during the Civil War and Private Gedeon, U. S. Army Infantry, received his medal for actions during the Philippine Insurrection. The next time you are in northwest Washington, DC, plan to visit the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, the predecessor to Arlington National Cemetery.



## Andrew Berlin celebrates 101st birthday

By Carol Mitchell

On Monday, December 10, KHC LaGarde 4 had their monthly birthday celebration. This celebration was extra special this month because one of our residents, Mr. Andrew Berlin, turned 101! Mr. Berlin is a spry centurion plus one. He grew up in a Catholic orphanage in New York City where the nuns according to him treated him wonderfully. He still has family spread out all over the United States. His military career spanned 23.5 years starting out in New Jersey at Camp Kilmer. Mr. Berlin became a Mess Steward for the Army and traveled all over the world. His favorite tour of duty was in Europe where he spent 7.5 years. Mr. Berlin decided to come to the Armed Forces Retirement Home - Washington on Nov. 10, 1994 giving the Home and its residents and employees the pleasure of knowing him for the past 18 years. Happy Birthday!!



## Notes from the AFRH-W, Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee



Another year is approaching, and New Year resolutions are in order. It is a rare individual, or organization, that can resolve to not change what they are doing, but to keep on doing what they have done in the past year – albeit better, if possible.

In our organization we wake each morning (it does not get any better than that!) to see that our security force has ensured safe surroundings, the food service staff has prepared our food, the grounds and building maintenance staff have cleaned, fixed and im-

proved our environment, the recreation staff has prepared events and activities for us, and the medical staff is ready attend to our needs. We can believe that those staff members have resolved to keep the service standards high, last year, next year, and every year.

As we go into the New Year we can look for changes that will make our home even better; the new Scott Building will be completed, and we will be unified, with all residents living in the main campus area. We will have a swimming pool and improved outdoor recreational facilities, and we will again have an auditorium (or multi-purpose room) to allow those delightful students from around the nation to visit and entertain us.

Of course there is always work to do. Because of the level of communication and

After arriving home from work in the late afternoon one day this week, from way up high I heard the call of a hawk, and I stopped to watch it. There are a few hawks that hover over our campus. I love to hear their cry. It was as though it lifted me out of the big push of work, and out of the mundane, it lifted me up. Raised not just my gaze but the gaze of my heart. It is freedom and beauty. I'm convinced there are no rabbits on the campus and most assuredly, there would be many more squirrels because of the hawks. I did watch a hawk drop a squirrel one day. Amazing to watch a hawk doing its thing. One or two rest somewhere in the woods behind the Quarter Houses and for that reason, I get to observe them. One day I saw one in flight and looked up and he was a huge hawk. There was a moment while watching him circle that I believe he was looking straight down at me—Wow.

The ever-changing, unfolding, beauty, drama, and presence of God's creation. What was Wordsworth's phrase?

Thanks to the human heart by which we live, Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears, To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

The pressure we bring upon ourselves

## Key Partnerships making a difference

Volunteers  
By Carolyn Haug

December at the Armed Forces Retirement Home is filled with holiday spirit as volunteers, friends and visitors decorate, sing carols, hand out cards & gifts and serve holiday refreshments! Some of our friends who stopped by this month included: Catholic University Ladies Field Hockey Team, Winston Churchill Leo Club, The Potomacs Acapella Group, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Boy Scout Troop 115, Gold Star Mom Kathy Cross, The DC Holiday Project, Navy Sea Cadets, White House Communications Agency, Northrop Grumman Military Bowl sponsors and the San Jose State University Spartan Football Team. We thank our Veterans for your service and wish you a Happy New Year!!

**Happy Holidays from Costco!**

By Amanda Jensem, CTRS



Costco, following in the steps of Santa, has provided gifts to The Armed Forces Retirement Home. Annually they bring much needed items and enjoy seeing

from life, worries, work, so called conveniences, or too much technology, or from who-knows-what—it eats at us. It steals our joy and brings only bad to us—loss of thankfulness, anxiousness, sense of purpose, discouragement and so often bad health!

Sue was telling me last night about a friend from high school, who posted on Facebook that she had just finished making 40 Christmas gift boxes for the homeless where she lived. She planned, purchased, wrapped and delivered these gifts and said, "It was the best gift I've ever given". Giving of ourselves, sacrificing, honoring others, being thankful is the secret to happiness and a sense of fulfillment. It buries that ugly selfish part in each of us. Regular practice of giving ourselves to others heals what ails us, rights our relationships, straightens out stinkin' thinkin', and releases us from dungeons. People who practice this type of life don't put it on a to-do list underneath cleaning the gutters. Lift yourselves up, do something for someone!

David Watkins

## Happy New Year!!!

the smiles on the faces of everyone as they walk in. This year AFRH was presented with the following items: card tables with chairs, a desktop printer, DVD/VCR player, coolers, pots and pans, an outdoor space heater, convection toaster ovens, a digital camera, a stereo and computer software for pictures. Many Costco staff presented the gifts to the residents and staff on Saturday morning, Dec. 8th and afterwards socialized with the residents. Costco has been providing gifts to AFRH for the past 5 years and we look forward to continuing our friendship with them. We would like to personally thank the Inventory Control Specialists Dean Roberts, Andrew Santmier, Kathy Kinter, Tonya Mitchell, and Joe Portera, EVP. On behalf of Costco, they wish everyone a Happy Holiday.



**Military Order of the Cooties**  
By Amanda Jensem, CTRS

Throughout the year The Military Order of the Cooties provide a donut

social for the residents of the King Health Center on the second Saturday each month. In December they come the third Saturday so they can visit with the residents closer to the holidays. Each year they provide gifts to the Recreation Therapy department to use for the residents. This year they provided items needed for our cooking groups. We received food storage containers, place settings for 8 with serving pieces, and Pyrex glass bowls for mixing and storing. The M.O.C. group has been visiting with the residents for 20+ years. Each month the resident look forward to socializing with them, and especially enjoying the delicious donuts that they bring! Together with the M.O.C., Recreation Therapy would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

## ARMY-NAVY GAME 2012

By Jerry Carter

The Army-Navy football game was shown on TV in the Sheridan Lobby on December 8th 2012. Our residents saw one of the best rivalries in college football. This game takes place because of the respect for all who serve our country with honor. Navy defeated Army 17- 13 in a close, hard fought game between to evenly matched teams. This classic battle was enjoyed by all residents who attended this event. Recreation services provided pizza, chicken wings, and cold beer during the game. Recreation services would like to thank co-workers, residents who volunteered and the Navy Chiefs from Fort Meade who helped make this football program a fun and successful event for all who attended.

Joseph Wachter

From the AFRH-G Administrator



As we begin this New Year, it is a great time to reflect on the past and look forward to new possibilities in the coming year. It is a wonderful time to reconnect with family and friends, read that book you have always wanted to, take up an exercise program or learn a new hobby. One thing I encourage all the residents to do is take advantage of all the opportunities offered you here at AFRH-G. Your quality of life is the key to peaceful living. We are here to help you live a serene and gratifying life. I also want to thank all the employees, both government and contract for your dedication, professionalism and compassion. I look forward to 2013 and working with you to deliver the best services we can to our residents.

This year we also checked in and processed 103 new residents. So, if you are a new resident today, you probably will not be for long as we continue to check in new residents every week. This leads me to bring up New Resident Orientation. If you are a new resident, please plan on attending our New Resident Orientation on the fourth Thursday of every month at 0930 in the theater. You will have a chance to meet all the different depart-

ment heads and ask any questions that you may have. Even if you are not a new resident, please feel free to attend.

The month of December was filled with activities, tree lightings and Christmas carols. We started off with the monthly birthday dinner with the December residents taking pictures with Santa, Mrs. Claus and a lovely elf. We have had children’s choirs and dancers entertain the residents along with local school children decorating the Christmas trees in the multi-function hallway. It has been very jovial and festive and I hope you have enjoyed yourself.

The installation of Senior TV has started and moved very quickly. We have already signed up over 260 residents. I would like to thank the employees and resident volunteers and the new “Senior TV” subscribers for your hard work and patience in making the installation process go as smooth as it did. If you are having a problem with your Senior TV, please follow the instructions you were handed out to get your service back to normal. Even if you have not made up your mind about switching over, don’t worry. You can just visit Resident Services to sign up at any time. Please do not forget to let us know if you get a new phone number. We should have some good news on HD TV soon.

As we continue to grow in our resident population our needs in parking has also increased significantly. We are currently looking at ways to restructure some of our garage

parking areas to accommodate additional parking as well as the possibility of a motorcycle parking area. We are aware of several residents who own more than one vehicle; we ask that any resident that has more than one vehicle parked in the garage to please move all but your primary vehicle to the RV parking lot in order free up additional spaces for future residents. We are also currently revising our Traffic Regulations Standard Operating Procedure to include Parking Regulations that will clearly define “Oversized Vehicle Parking”, “Low Emissions/Fuel Efficient”, “Motorcycle”, and “Car/Van Pool” reserved spaces. We also want to remind each of our residents that if you reside in the State of Mississippi you must have your vehicles registered within this State to include recreational vehicles (RV’s) as well as enclosed and open

utility trailers. The District 8 Office of the Mississippi Public Safety Office stated you have 60 days to obtain a Mississippi Driver’s License and 30 days to register all personal vehicles to include RV’s and utility trailers. For questions or concerns regarding these state requirements please call the District 8 Office of the Mississippi Public Safety Office at 228-539-4881.

Just remember as we start off 2013 that all the employees here at AFRH-G are here to serve you, our veterans, who have served our country for our freedom and we are so very thankful for each and every one of you.

Happy New Year!

Chuck Dickerson



Naomi Plummer enjoys a holiday visit with Air Force Top 3 members from Keesler Air For Base.

“Feed my Sheep”  
Calendar Girls charitable donation reaches \$15,000



The Calendar Girls have been working very hard for several months and this project is paying off in a big way. It has taken a lot of work and dedication by all who have been involved in making this calendar a huge success. Most importantly this charitable donations goes to a great cause.

KAFB help Valor & Loyalty Christmas Cheer Abound!

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

With assistance from KAFB 81st Training Squadron, the Christmas Parties on Valor & Loyalty Hall were set and ready for a grand time! Jean Allgood, retired school teacher, set the tone with beautiful Christmas music on the piano as residents listened in the Valor Hall lounge. Regular volunteers assisted with menu selection, escorts, and reminiscing. Behind the scenes, KAFB 81st Training Squadron volunteers were putting together each Valor & Loyalty Hall resident stocking that will be given out on Christmas Day. The adopted stocking program paired up active military individuals with a resident on Valor & Loyalty Hall to focus on their person-centered needs and interests in order to add a special touch. After completing their secret mission, KAFB volunteers helped serve meal trays, take pictures, and assist with gift giving. Residents brightened when Santa, Ms. Claus, Elf, and Rudolph delivered presents to each resident. A special thanks to SMSgt Jason Holbert and TSgt Vicente Asano for organizing support and assisting with this event. TSgt Asano stated, "we had such a great time and it was an honor supporting those who have served before us."Merry Christmas Cheer to All!"



Santa and all of his helpers made Valor & Loyalty Hall parties very special for all residents.

Notes from the AFRH-G Chairman, Resident Advisory Committee



As we wrap up December and 2012, the year we leave behind is full of memories, changes and growth!

Our resident count this month is 527 and we welcomed several new residents that will add to our family. We said good bye to our devoted Mary Kay, who endured the destruction of the old home and guided the rebuilding of the new home. She will be missed.

Fred and his talented team in the Food Service Department exceeded our exceptions again. We have been pleased with the courteous service, tasty food and excellent care they put into each meal and particularly Birthday Night.

The flags continue to grace the entrance of the home. The new fence is complete which provides a touch of uniformity to the entrance, as well as safety to the residents.

Again, we need to acknowledge the efforts of our own Calendar Girls. They have met and exceeded their goal of \$10,000 from Calendar sales to donate to the local “Feed My Sheep” organization. I am amazed at their dedication, zeal and determination to spend long hours of their time out in the public, to make these calendars a success. And a success it has been!!! Do you know how many calendars they need to sell at \$15.00 each to make over \$10,000? The Veteran Calendar Girls first donated \$1,000 and then another \$10,000 for a total of \$11,000 and are ready to donate another \$4,000, that’s \$15,000 any way you cut it. AND THE SELLS CONTINUE!!!

The RAC has listened and taken note, the afternoon dance, due to low Resident attendance, will take a new twist. Watch for the January calendar to check out other venues that will fill the time

This is the things that happened at the RAC Meeting:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Thanks again for helping to make this a Friendlier/Happier/Patriotic Home!
- Appoint as Floor Rep Ron Harding B-2.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

- Minutes of Meeting for November 13, 2012 were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Received update on “Reflection Pool and Freedom Plaque”.
- Received update on cleaning contract for washers/dryers.
- Received update on Hand Soap dispensers.
- Received update on renaming street, waiting on word from Mr. McManus.
- Received status of a different Accounting Service, will not happen!

NEW BUSINESS:

- RAC received updates from all Committee Chairpersons.
- Financial Income Reports reviewed for Nov 2012.
- Discussed facial tissue and recommended Residents buy their own.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Charlie Ridens made a motion to resend a motion

made five months ago, motion decided to be out of order.

-Bill Knight discussed the Vice Chairman position and the Chair will meet with Mr. McManus on the issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

Many thanks again to the staff, management, volunteers and residents that continue to make this a better place to live.

“United we stand...Let’s keep it that way!” Enjoy!!

Bill Parker



On behalf of the residents Bill Parker thanks American Legion Commander Mildred Johnson for the state flag donations.

# AFRH-G December Activities

## Mental & physical benefits

### Tai Chi offers a sound way to exercise

*By Sean Campbell, Recreation Specialist*

Mental clarity, a healthy body, good balance and a strong heart. Aren't these things that we strive to keep intact as we age? One of the ways to keep these areas at their peak might be right here at AFRH-G. I am referring to the Tai Chi class that is being held every Monday at 10:00 a.m. Sure, the word sounds a little intimidating but, with the help of our excellent volunteer instructor, Yorda Hay, you will find out that the class is easy to learn and practice. There are many different styles of Tai Chi. The style Yorda teaches is called Tai Chi Chih (pronounced Tie-Chee-Cha). It is described as, "joy through movement" or moving meditation. Tai Chi is not a martial art, however, martial artists use the Chi energy for self-defense and to demonstrate the

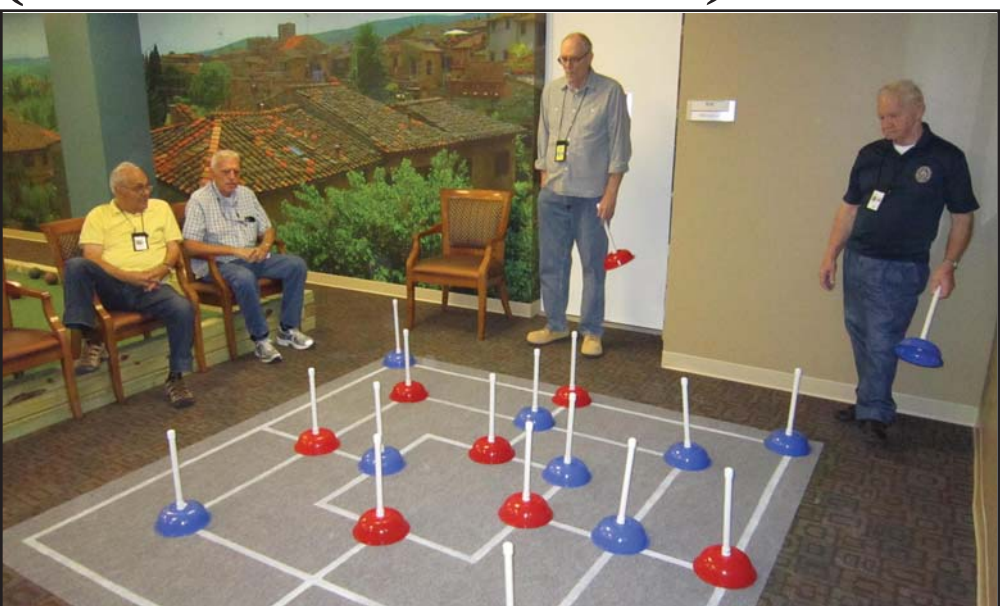
power of Chi for breaking wood or bricks. The benefits of Tai Chi can be felt within weeks or months of practicing.

No special clothing, equipment or experience is required. The benefits are obtained regardless of physical condition, agility or age. It is practiced with the body relaxed but, the mind clear and focused. There are additional benefits to the mind and the body. Some of these include: reduction in stress, strengthening the immune system, promoting peace and tranquility. It can also help to manage chronic diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, depression and diabetes. If you happen to be suffering from one of these ailments or are just curious about what Tai Chi is then, please join Yorda for a fantastic class next Monday! We'll see you there!



Monday mornings Ron Keel and Joseph O'Carroll (seated) take advantage of the whole body exercise by participating in Tai Chi class.

## New Tournament Game (Nine Men Morris)



Residents Larry Colbruno, Moe Drolet, John Young and Fred Ray compete in the first Nine Men Morris tournament.

*By Dennis Crabtree, Recreation Specialist*

The AFRH-Gulfport has a new tournament game called Nine Men Morris. Nine Men Morris is actually a game brought back by Colbruno, Lawrence (Larry) where he learned to play it in Germany.

The residents played their first tournament on Dec 17, 2012. Here you can see the concentration/strategy of the minds to win the game. So if you want to learn how to play this game just ask one of the players. Players are (Left) Larry Colbruno, (Left Middle) Moe Drolet, (Right Middle) John Young and (Right) Fred Ray.

## Gulfport host several December events

*By Adelina Hay-Sowell*

The halls were decked, the ornaments gleaming and the children from "Wings" youth performance group, ringed the 15 foot Christmas tree with their youthful enthusiasm and voices. The residents joined in the caroling and then Bill Parker, RAC chairman plugged in the Christmas tree lights, officially opening the holiday season here at the Armed Forces Retirement home on November 30th, 2012. Afterwards everyone had hot cider, cookies and punch. The children also visited residents on D Tower.

All the residents had visits from Santa and his entourage that included Rudolph, Mrs. Claus and a cheerful elf, for the birthday dinner and the Valor/Loyalty Hall Christmas party. Rumor has it that Santa visited the evening festivities for the Christmas dance on December 21st as well.

Trees lined the pre-function area with a variety of decorations made and placed by local area schools, who wanted to do their part to bring Christmas cheer to the residents here. Along with visitors from the North Pole, local choirs and schools came to serenade us with beautiful Christmas songs. Girl Scouts, High school groups, and many other organizations in the community have all come out to share the holiday spirit with the residents. We even had a Vietnam Veteran's

## "WINGS Performing" Arts help Resident countdown to Christmas!



WINGS Performing Arts perform holiday favorites for residents and guest just prior to the lighting of the tree.

*By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreational Services*

On Friday, November 30, the WINGS Performing Arts circled the AFRH-G Front Lobby, sang carols, and helped countdown the lighting of the Christmas Tree. After the group visited with residents, they travelled to Valor & Loyalty Hall to spread the cheer upstairs. The WINGS performing artists are aspiring actors, actresses, musicians, and artisans that gather at Lynn Meadows Discovery Center to showcase their talents through art shows, plays, concerts, and festivals. The WINGS Performing Arts is a nationally recognized program that seeks to nurture the talent, spirit, and leadership of young people through commitment to the arts, community service and leadership. Over five hundred youth and children from across the gulf coast engage in productions that reach more than 21,000 audience members a year through community and school performances partnered with arts and educational organizations. WINGS has also been the recipient of several awards including a Coming Up Taller Award from the President's Council on the Arts and Humanities at the White House, the Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in Arts Education, and the Mississippi Humanities Educator Award. We look forward to seeing these performers at the annual DREAMS concert held at the Beau Rivage in the spring.

## USM Students & History

### Department

### Share the season with Valor & Loyalty Hall

*By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services*

On Friday November 30, University of Southern Mississippi History Professor Douglas Bristol and college students arrived in time for the holiday happenings. They quickly began painting and assisting residents on



With the help of a few special friends Dwyght Shelby and Lois Hogan show off their Christmas stockings.

Valor & Loyalty Hall with needed designs to brighten and personalize their Christmas stockings. Stories began flowing as the group reminisced about WWII, careers, and missions. After completing the stockings and a bite of lunch, the volunteers returned for their secret Santa helper mission. The group began labelling and wrapping the resident Christmas gifts for each Valor & Loyalty resident. This has become a yearly tradition now as this group assisted last year, too. We thank our community partner - USM - for enhancing, brightening, and sharing the holiday season with our veteran residents!

group come and give out patriotic ball caps to the residents for their service.

Our big hurrah to end the Christmas and Chanukah holiday season was the New Year's Eve dance, which we celebrated on Eastern Standard Time, and watched the ball drop in New York on the big screen while we had our own balloon drop here. The room glittered with beautiful dresses and men dressed to the nines to bring in the New Year. After the official New Year's Eve dance was over, the remaining hearty souls toasted in the New Year's southern style with moon pies and RC cola! It was the perfect finishing touch to a great year. Welcome 2013, we look forward to more fun and festivities in this New Year!



Volunteers from the local area help decorate trees.

# AFRH-W December Activities

## Virginia Hills Bluegrass sets Holiday Mood

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist

Holiday Spirits soared as bluegrass music infused the Sheridan building on Sunday, December 2nd. Lisa Bushman, a fiddler player who has played for AFRH-W Residents in the past, brought the bluegrass band, Virginia Hills, to perform for us this December.

The band’s repertoire of songs was outstanding; they played a mixture of old time favorites, Christmas songs and traditional bluegrass, as well as taking requests! One Resident, Bill Opferman, even got up and sang a song with them. We also had folks enthusiastically singing to songs such as “Country Roads” and “Will the Circle Be Unbroken.” The next day Residents could still be heard humming tunes in the halls.

A heart felt thank you goes to Virginia Hills: Lisa Bushman (fiddle), Patty Rogers (guitar, vocals, MC), Keith Rogers (string bass, vocals, sound), Wayne Ashbrook (mandolin, vocals) and Glenn Cantrell (banjo). We are looking forward to hearing you again! If you would like to hear the band before they return to AFRH, they frequently perform at Tiffany Tavern in Alexandria and at the Farmers’ Market in Warrenton.



Members of the Virginia Hills Bluegrass get down to some serious pickin’ and grinning.

## Bishop McNamara Holiday Dancers

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

A holiday tradition has begun between AFRH and Bishop McNamara High School Dancers. Each year in December, as well as the spring, the residents are entertained by over 50 dancers who come to show off their new dance moves. They learn dance in all styles, such as tap dancing, ballet, and contemporary. They brought songs such as “Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer”, the theme song from “The Nutcracker”, and other holiday favorites. The dancers costumes also help tell the story of the song they dance to. We would like to thank the two dance instructors who work at Bishop McNamara and who bring the dancers to us, Cindy King and Victoria Keithline. Cindy is a member of the Dance Educators of America and the International Tap Association. She has taught dance for over 30 years, beginning her career by starting a dance school in her family’s basement. She has been a dance instructor at Bishop McNamara for 10 years. Victoria is a member of the International Tap Association, Dance Educators of America and the Maryland Council for Dance. In 1994 she developed the dance program at the school and is currently the Director of Dance for the Fine Arts Department. The residents of AFRH truly enjoy the variety of dances they see at each performance and always look forward to their next visit. Happy Holidays!

## Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair a Hit

By Lori Thompson, Art Specialist

Once again AFRH Resident crafters and artists delighted us with their talents at this year’s Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair. From Mimi Rivkin’s paintings to Marge Jirak’s ceramic trees and from Jo Colvard’s knitted hats to Sandy In-torre’s bejeweled trees, there was something for everyone’s Christmas list. Thank you to the employees and Residents who supported this event. Happy Holidays to All!



Magazine rack handmade by Ken Faller in the woodshop.



Jo Colvard unwraps one of her beautiful knitted sweaters.

## Stay Physically Active

By Jerry Carter

Keep active, even if that's just going for a walk. Physical activity improves blood flow, which brings increased oxygen to the brain and reduces your risk of heart disease and stroke, which ultimately reduce your risk of mental decline and illness. It's also possible that physical activity helps the brain by decreasing the harmful effects of stress hormones. Some research even suggests that physical activity may promote regeneration of brain cells or the birth of new ones.

One study, based on data from nearly 19,000 women between the ages of 70 and 81, showed that long term regular physical activity was associated with higher levels of mental functioning and less mental decline, an effect similar to being three years younger. In addition, the activity didn't have to be strenuous to have an effect: Walking at least

an hour and a half a week at a leisurely pace provided mental benefits. The same appears to be true for men. Another study showed that older men who walked regularly were less likely to develop dementia. A study of Dutch, Italian and Finnish older men found that those who maintained or increased their physical activity over a period of 10 years had less mental decline.

All residents are invited to join the AFRH Walking Club. Each participant will receive a walking log book for recording of all miles walked. Jackets, tee-shirts, and polo shirts are awarded for walking certain number of miles. Also residents can check out walking poles for daily use. Walking and using these walking poles are fun way to stay healthy, improve physical condition, strength and enjoy wonderful outdoor weather! For more information please visit my office-room 1005.

Dreams Do Come True by Donald Freer, AFRH-W Resident  
My dream came true.

I went to my first Monday Night Football Game (one of the longest running shows on TV) to see the Super Bowl Champions, the New York Giants vs the Washington Redskins.

I had a Dream Ticket which sat me in the front row. I turned around and two rows back sat two Hogs. I asked them if I could take their picture. They said give your camera to the person next to you and come up here. Wow. I now have a Dream Picture!

I had one last dream as I sat there having a hot dog and soda waiting for the kickoff. It also came true.

Washington Redskins 17 – New York Giants 16!

## Rockin’ the Night Away during the annual Holiday Dance

By Nicole Chappell

On Friday, December 14th, AFRH celebrated our Holiday Party in the Sheridan Dining Hall aka (Jerry’s Diner), which transformed into a delightful holiday dance hall. That included seating for all and an ample dance floor to shake a leg, hand, chair, and head too! “Dancin’, Dancin’, Dancin’ She’s a dancin’ machine”, set the theme for this year’s holiday party. The guests and residents in attendance danced throughout the night to the sensational holiday music provided by The Army Blues Combo Band and DJ Billy White aka (Music Man). Some residents and guests preferred to sit back and enjoy the sight of live hand and line dancing. While other residents enjoyed spending time with their family members and friends who were able to attend the party. There was delicious food and dessert aplenty with such favorites as sweet & sour meatballs, chicken wings, shrimp, wine, beer, and more! Three cheers for the superb menu selection from Food Services. A big holiday thank you to the magnificent band and DJ for playing music that kept everyone on their feet moving to the beat all night long!

Special thanks to Steve McManus, David Watkins, for their attendance. In addition, thanks to Carolyn Haug, Jerry Carter, Susan Chubb, Fred Hornsby, Liz Garris, Mr. Snow & the Dining Hall staff, Carol Mitchell, Sarah Kenan and the KHC Nursing Staff for all of their hard work and participation. Lastly, to our wonderful volunteers: Annie Aaron, JEAC, Joan Pease, and Carolyn Cukierman for making this year’s event successful.

By summarizing this year’s event, I must add that the Recreation Department “Sure does know how to throw a party.”

Until next year, ‘Happy Holidays’ to all!



Obviously everyone is having a great time during the Holiday Dance.



Sarah Kenan and Earl Clifton take to the dance floor during one of the musical sets.

# Visitors across Gulf Coast share holiday spirit

By Susan Bergman, MT-BC, Recreation Services

The holiday season has brought many visitors from across the Gulf Coast to warm the hearts of AFRH-G residents. On December 5, Trinity Methodist Children's Choir & Liturgical Dancers graced the community center with ukuleles, hand bells, angels, singers, dancers, and more. Pearl Harbor Day brought Keesler Air Force Base Top 3 visitors dressed in service blue uniforms to share stories and bake cookies with residents on Valor & Loyalty Hall. On December 12, Daisy Troop 5927, Brownie Troop, Junior Girl Scout Troop 6346 and Senior Girl Scout Troop 6046 brought cheer through their caroling around the main lobby Christmas tree, caroling down the halls in Valor, and special visit to Loyalty Hall residents. The Navy Band New Orleans wind ensemble made up of a flute, 2 clarinets, and saxophone lead residents in a sing-a-long of favorites. On Saturday, December 15, Dr. Erica Hopkins shared her classical piano talent with residents in the Valor Hall lounge followed by an afternoon visit of carols & decorations by Cub Scout Pack 321. On Monday, December 17, Trinity Methodist returned with a performance by their puppet ministry, bringing smiles and good cheer and the Gulf Coast Wind Ensemble gave a Christmas evening performance on December 18. With the holidays being a time of giving, Gulf Coast visitors truly gave of their time, spirit, and warmth. We thank them all and to all a good year!!!



Mary Jane Farr enjoys meeting and visiting with singers from the Girl Scouts.



Girl Scouts delight residents, staff and guest by singing some holiday favorites.



Above: Uplifting performance by the Trinity Methodist Liturgical Dancers. Left: Fred Schell enjoys watching the Little Angels perform.

## Decorations, music, tree-lighting ceremonies and just plan fun

### LaGarde Holiday Tree Lighting

By Amanda Jensema, CTRS

The holidays officially began on December 4th with the annual KHC Tree Lighting Ceremony. The week prior to the event the residents and staff were getting excited as they watched the tree being decorated with ornaments and lights. On December 4th we had a music filled ceremony. Steven Briefs with the M.C. for the event. Father Dixon provided a lovely invocation which was followed by a holiday remarks from the Chief of Healthcare Services, Pamela Young which ended with the tree lighting up. The music began with the KHC Choir performing "Oh Christmas Tree". Members of the choir this year were residents Raymond Marriott, Edith Ellington, Louis Di Croce, and Elliott Bronfman. Various members from different departments also joined in with the choir to include Bill Striegel and Dee Dee Foster and myself directing the band. Our pianist was the one and only Ray Anderson. We were also treated to the wonderful musical styling of the ALP Band. The Army Old Guard Fife & Drum Corp. was also here to play. We were blown away by their amazing trumpet sounds. They always help make our tradition of lighting the KHC Christmas Tree a special event. We would like to thank the volunteers from the U.S. Army Signal Detachment School based out of Ft. Meade for assisting us with making this one of the best tree lighting ceremonies, especially since this was the last one that will be held in the King Health Center. Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!!!

### Sheridan Holiday Tree Lighting

By Mary Catherine Murano

On Tues. Dec. 4th, AFRH celebrated the annual Tree Lighting Program, a tradition which marks the start of the holiday season and a chance for all those in attendance to offer heartfelt season's greetings to one another. The evening began with a warm invocation delivered by AFRH Chaplain John Goodloe, followed by holiday messages handwritten by Friends of the Soldiers Home John Hughes and Zach Hartman, as well as the presentation of a beautiful holiday wreath to the Home. To all of the residents and Friends who had gathered, the U.S. Army Brass Quintet played a medley of Christmas music followed by 3 specially selected holiday sing-a-longs, of which Girl Scout Troop #1877 joined in. Immediately following, holiday remarks were delivered by AFRH COO Steve McManus, along with an invitation to gather outside for the annual illumination of the 20 ft + tree by one very special child, handpicked by Mr. McManus himself. While the evening offered unseasonably warm weather to all, the thought of Christmas cookies inside lured everyone back in. Many chose to stay long after the event was over, enjoying conversations with residents and visiting with Santa and Mrs. Claus while listening to the tunes of AFRH DJ Billy White. Many thanks to AFRH personnel and volunteers for keeping the celebration alive: AFRH Senior Staff; Volunteer MC2 (SCW) Brian Caracci, White House Communications Agency; Resident Jim Webster; Carolyn Haug, Volunteer Services; Recreation and Recreation Therapy personnel; DJ Billy White; and Campus Ops for all of their support in preparation for this special occasion.



Left: Old Army Guard Fife & Drum Corps performance in la La-Garde. Right: Zach Hartman and John Hughes read handwritten letters to the residents from the community.



Charles Jones selects a hand full of goodies from Mrs. Claus.



Santa Claus is a big hit with the local children.